

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

- 5 1. A method for providing data files to a remote user over a channel comprising:
determining the speed of a channel;
using said speed, estimating the transfer time for a data file;
responsive to said transfer time, determining whether to transfer said data file or a
compressed version of said data file; and
transferring said data file or a compressed version of said data file, based on said
determining.
- 10 2. A method according to claim 1 wherein said determining the speed of a channel
comprises:
sending a test on said channel; and
detecting the transfer time of said test on said channel.
- 15 3. A method according to claim 1 wherein said determining the speed of a channel is
initiated when a request is received from a user to download a large digital file.
- 20 4. A method according to claim 1 wherein said data files include at least one file of
at least one file type from the group consisting of:
digitally encoded audio files,
digitally encoded video files,
digitally encoded text, and
digitally encoded images.
- 25 5. A method according to claim 1 wherein said sending a test is initiated in response
to a user login.
6. A method according to claim 1 further comprising:
receiving an indication from a user system as to what compression formats are
decodable by said user system.
7. A method according to claim 1 further comprising:
transmitting to a user system an applet required to access a compressed file.
8. A method according to claim 1 further comprising:

transmitting to a user system data representing a list indicating available data files and indicating estimated transfer times for said data files and for compressed versions of a data file; and
receiving a user selection of a data file indicating a desired transfer delay.

- 5 9. A method according to claim 1 further comprising:
comparing a transfer time for a data file to a threshold;
transferring a compressed file instead of said large digital data file if said transfer time exceeds said threshold.
- 10 10. A method according to claim 9 wherein said threshold is configurable as a maximum acceptable delay.
11. A method according to claim 9 further comprising:
if a time for transmitting a file exceeds a threshold, converting a file to another format.
12. A method for providing remotely accessible multimedia messages comprising:
determining the speed of a channel;
15 determining the transfer time for available messages and attachments using the size of available messages and attachments and said speed;
providing data representing a list of available messages to a user, wherein at least one listed message with a transit time greater than a threshold is provided with at least two compression options; and
20 receiving from a user data indicating a desired compression option.
13. A method according to claim 12 wherein said determining the speed of a channel comprises:
sending a test on said channel; and
detecting the transfer time of said test on said channel.
- 25 14. A method according to claim 12 wherein said multimedia messages include at least one file of at least one file type from the group consisting of:
digitally encoded voice messages,
digitally encoded email messages,
digitally encoded video messages, and
30 facsimiles.

15. A method according to claim 12 further comprising:
receiving an indication from a user system as to what compression formats are
decodable by said user system;
when necessary, transmitting to a user system an applet required to access a
compressed file.
16. A method according to claim 12 further comprising:
using user access patterns and information and system information to determine
whether to compress messages before a server is connected to by a user and to
determine whether to delete precompressed messages when system resources are
low.
17. A server system able to communicate adjustable sized messages to a client
comprising:
an interface (220) able to connect over a channel (110) or an optional channel (110a)
to a user system;
a test (140) sent over an active channel to determine a channel speed;
a timer (240) able to determine said transit speed;
two or more message files (252) of a determined size, selectable for presentation; and
one or more compressed message files (254), alternatively selectable for presentation.
18. An apparatus according to claim 17 further comprising:
analysis logic for determining whether to compress messages prior to access by a user,
based on user parameters.
19. An apparatus according to claim 17 wherein said apparatus is embodied into a
fixed media containing logic instructions that when loaded into appropriately configured
computer systems will cause the system to embody said server.
20. A method for presenting to a user a list (400) of messages for interacting with a
multimedia message server comprising:
presenting to a user an identification (402) of a message available for transfer;
presenting, for said message, an indication of a first transfer time (410) and a second
transfer time (412), said second transfer time indicating time for transfer of a
compressed message; and
registering a user action indicating a compression option to be transferred.